

**BUTTE COUNTY
CHILDREN AND FAMILIES COMMISSION
Friday, December 6, 2002
Special Meeting Minutes**

Held at the Community Employment Center, Sequoia Room, 2445 Carmichael Drive, Chico, the meeting was called to order at 10:00 A.M.

Item 1: Introductions

Commissioners present: Chair Patricia Cragar, Jane Dolan, Marian Gage, Gary House, Sandra Machida, Karen Marlatt, Linda Moore, and Gene Smith.

Commissioners absent: Vice-Chair Mark Lundberg

Staff present: Cheryl Giscombe.

Staff absent: Eva Puciata.

Heather Senske, BCOE, Jerry Allred, BCOE, Lynn Haskell, Valley Oak Children Services, Carol Roberts, Valley Oak Children Services, Carol Lams, OPT for Fit Kids, were also present.

Item 2: Agenda Review

Major items are presentations of school readiness application, Strategic Plan review public hearing, the report by the Strategic Plan Committee, review and approval of October 18, 2002 minutes.

Item 3: Draft October 18, 2002 Meeting Minutes

Moved to accept the minutes as written. Motion was seconded and was passed unanimously.

Item 4: School Readiness Application to State Commission

Heather Senske and Jerry Allred, of BCOE presented the School Readiness Application, a statewide initiative for the California Children and Families Commission. It sets specific expectations and guidelines in the request for applications. Most applications are one site or district centered. Butte County adopted the commission's principles of inclusion and equity. It included five school communities: schools, early care and education providers and systems, parents, community members, and health and social services. Coordinating all this has been a very difficult endeavor.

We worked to interpret guidelines from the state into the services and the relationships we propose for Butte County to connect the service system and site specific direct services in Butte County. A lot of good feedback has been collected from focus groups, stakeholders, parents, and partners to help define community needs and develop the program.

There have been a number of noteworthy, but not necessarily apparent successes in the project. Partner relationships have strengthened through the process. There is a better understanding of agency roles and responsibilities and activities. Based on the input gathered during the process, a proposal has been developed. It has been difficult to put together a proposal to identify the needs and services at multiple sites with multiple needs and multiple existing services.

Three major themes emerged during the collaborative process. First, the County and systems lack collaboration of services/resources and understanding. Second, we don't have the outreach and connection services for health and support services. Third, kids don't get transitioned well from pre-schools and homes into the school system. Kids are not coming into school ready to learn. Parents don't understand well enough to prepare them.

Staffing provides for these three areas as direct services: to help link special needs, cultural needs, training needs of all the different partners. Schools have indicated they need someone making the connections in

those three areas. So in the revised proposal, there will be three staff who will deal with all five school sites to varying degrees since some won't need as much support as others.

There was concern about accepting the proposal as written. It lacks clarity. Some details haven't been worked out yet. There is confusion as to what services partners will provide. There is concern that there might not be adequate staffing to provide all the services since it's not one person/one area, and that the partners need more direction to better prepare their budgets and staff in order to implement this proposal. More discussion is desired before moving on the proposal; however, December 15th is the deadline. There is a June 15th opportunity also.

A lot of work has been done on this proposal and there are still loose ends to wrap up, i.e., lack of clarity related to the roles and relationships of Valley Oaks and Strong Start and making sure other partners are identified who may have concerns and ironing those out. Can it be done by December 15? Or do we wait months to work out these issues? Without comprehensive commitment, understanding, and integration of the partners who are going to provide the services, there is a critical missing link.

This is a non-competitive grant. The state commission wants this to succeed. There is no harm in submitting multiple applications. We aren't dinged in any way. They want to see the project up and running as soon as funding is received. They want to see an application/proposal showing the planning is already done. If they feel we're not ready, they will say "no" but we won't lose our opportunity to reapply. Many county commissions are struggling because planning is taking more time than originally anticipated. Commissions can apply until they succeed. At the last state commission meeting they talked about extending the school readiness application periods. Submitting a second application shows progress to date and commitment to a successful project.

The original response letter from the review team noted the plan needed more specificity in the area of what services will be provided to the children, how they will be provided, and the outcomes for children and families. It's felt that the original proposal didn't address these concerns but the second application is closer. The review team will let the Commission know if these questions are satisfactorily answered this second time around without penalty.

Of all the partners, only three still don't have MOUs in place: Behavioral Health, Valley Oaks Children Services, and Chico State University.

Moved and seconded to approve the proposal as it stands contingent upon the MOUs being signed off by the partners, and if that can happen within the next five days, that the commission approve sign off on it. If that doesn't happen, then the commission works towards completing for the next application date.

Motion passed unanimously.

Item 5: 2002 Strategic Plan Annual Review / Public Hearing

A public hearing was held regarding the annual review of the strategic plan. Recommended revisions were reviewed.

Moved and seconded to approve the changes in the strategic plan and close the public hearing.
Motion passed unanimously.

A meeting is planned to look at partner input and the work done last summer, and come back to the commission in January with recommendations.

The meeting adjourned at 11:00 a.m.

Minutes by Josie Smith of An Executive Assistant.